



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 3, 2008

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TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS OFFERS TIPS FOR VICTIMS OF CREDIT FRAUD

Nashville, TN- Having your personal information lost or stolen can be a frightening experience. However, if you believe that your personal data has been accessed or compromised, there are steps you can take to help prevent potential misuse.

If you are a victim or potential victim of credit fraud, you have the option of placing either a fraud alert or credit freeze -or both- on your credit report.

A fraud alert is another tool for people who have had their personal information stolen - or who suspect it may have been stolen. With a fraud alert, which is free service to the consumer, businesses may still check your credit report. Depending on whether you place an initial 90-day fraud alert or an extended fraud alert, potential creditors must either contact you or use what the law refers to as "reasonable policies and procedures" to verify your identity before issuing credit in your name. However, the steps potential creditors take to verify your identity may not always alert them that the applicant is not you.

You may also pay a fee to place a credit freeze on your credit report. A credit freeze will prevent potential creditors and other third parties from accessing your credit report, unless you lift the freeze. Some consumers use credit freezes because they feel they give more protection.

Both fraud alerts and credit freezes are mainly effective against new credit accounts being opened in your name. This will likely not stop thieves from using your existing accounts, or opening new accounts such as new telephone or wireless accounts, where credit is often not checked.

If you are a victim, or believe that you are a possible victim of credit fraud, it is important that you contact one of the three credit reporting agencies and your local law enforcement as soon as possible. To place a fraud alert, contact one of the credit agencies at the numbers below or visit the agency's web site for more information on how to complete a fraud alert online. You only need to contact one of the agencies. That agency will notify the other two for you.

To place a credit freeze, you must submit a written request to each of the three credit agencies. Addresses for each agency can be found on the agency's web site.

To contact Equifax, call 1-800-525-6285 or visit their web site at www.equifax.com.

To contact Experian, call 1-888-397-3742 or visit www.experian.com.

To contact Trans Union call 1-800-680-7289, e-mail fvad@transunion.com or visit their web site at www.transunion.com.

For more information about identity theft and credit fraud, contact the State of Tennessee's Consumer Affairs Division at 615-741-4737 or visit www.state.tn.us/consumer.

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